

The Three Rs at work (from previous page)

Consequently, we have added beer and wine to our concession offerings and are undergoing a complete restroom renovation to put an end to the long lines at the ladies room. This has provided a huge boost to our audience morale.

3. The Millennials: Theatre is a notoriously tough sell for the Millennial Generation. Recent predictions say that young people age 15 to 35 will have over half of the buying power in the US within the next 20 years. As a group they are cautious with their disposable income and overwhelmingly more likely to find their information online.

This demographic is a vital part of our new marketing plan and consequently we have devoted more energy to social media and our online ticket sales. After multiple online video and photo campaigns the strategy is beginning to pay off; we have more than doubled our Facebook likes in the past year and are currently over 3,500.

4. Marketing and Development Director: The final and most valuable recommendation from our strategic plan was to hire a new staff member specifically tasked with relationship management. Grandstreet has a budget of over \$900,000 and with only five full-time staff members we were stretched thin. Starting Oct. 20, Tina Eblen came on staff full-time as our new marketing and development director. Her primary goal is to serve as an ambassador for Grandstreet and strengthen our relationships in the community.

Creating Relevance

Billings Symphony Society, Billings: Beginning in May of last season, in collaboration with the *Billings Gazette*, we held a "Country Idol" contest for a chance to sing on stage during our March 2015 season concert of *Gone Country*. People submitted audition videos via a YouTube audition process to our office.

A committee selected the top five finalists who then had the opportunity to record a song in the *Gazette's* Studio Enjoy. These finalists then sang their song live at our Symphony in the Park concert held on June 29. Following Symphony in the Park, the public voted for their favorite contestant. Of the final five that were selected, three were from Wyoming, one from Crow Agency, and one from Billings.

Symphony in the Park had many new attendees who came out to support their town's Country Idol contestant. Using social media, we were able to attract not only our usual attendees, but also a younger audience to the



Billings Symphony: *Gone Country* concert created a greater connection with people who were not part of the regular audience.

concert. We created a greater connection with people who were not part of our regular audience. Partnership with the *Billings Gazette* helped get the "buzz" out into the community.

We also used social media for a Facebook contest during Symphony in the Park in order to gain more people to "like" our Facebook page. We had people with camera phones take pictures during the concert as well as at intermission to send into our Facebook page. Of course, they needed to "like" our page before they could post a picture on it. The winner of the best picture had the opportunity to sit on stage with the musicians during the last half of the concert. We gained many more Facebook page viewers by doing this and also gave someone an awesome opportunity to be up close and personal with our musicians.

For our March concert, we gave fourth-grade students in Billings the chance to create visual interpretations of the *Aladdin Suite* by Carl Nielsen. We intentionally chose this piece because students could learn about a different culture through an historic legend.

We collaborated with Billings School District 2's art teachers to get this project completed. More than 1,000 pieces of art were submitted to our office and a committee chose 300 pictures for projection. These pictures were shown above the orchestra during the first half of our concert that evening.

The children who submitted art, along with their parents, were invited to attend the dress rehearsal the morning of the concert, but several more purchased tickets to attend the concert that evening as well.

Return on Investment

Montana Museum of Art and Culture, Missoula: MMAC leadership has worked in the area of cultural tourism development for years and Director Barbara Koostra is currently on the board of Destination Missoula, with a philosophy that museums and arts organizations must work hand in glove with tourism interests in order to achieve mutually beneficial goals within community, economic and cultural development.

During 2013-14, a number of special tours took place, including visits from the board of directors for Destination Missoula and the Montana Travel Advisory Council (TAC).

For the TAC visit, four distinct voices were invited to guide the visit. Economist Larry Swanson from the O'Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West; and Megan Tanner, a representative from the Institute for Travel and Tourism Research, spoke to the many economic benefits of the arts in Montana. They described both nonprofit and for-profit entities and how the arts and culture are among the tourism draws in the mix Montana offers its visitors as well as its citizens.

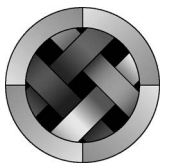
In addition, celebrated local artist George Gogas and much-respected art historian Dr. Rafael Chacon provided additional background on how important it is for citizens and

tourists/visitors to be able to see works by Picasso, Chagall, Rouault, De Chirico and the other masters who were available on view in the galleries. They spoke of the intrinsic value of art that cannot be put in dollar terms.

The combination of an artist, an art educator and economists worked beautifully to illustrate the symbiotic relationship of the arts with the local economy.



Montana Museum of Art and Culture: Members of the Tourism Advisory Council met with artist George Gogas, left, and art historian Rafael Chacon during a tour of "Figurative Modernists."



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FAQs about fundraising and boards

Kay Sprinkel Grace of GuideStar writes: "Boards and fundraising. It's a hot-button issue for almost everyone – from monolithic hospitals to closet-sized food pantries. In my years of consulting I've fielded hundreds if not thousands of questions on the subject."

She offers answers to the six questions she's asked most often at this link: tinyurl.com/q96z3vp

MAGDA seeks exhibition proposals for 2016-18

The Montana Art Gallery Directors Association (MAGDA) is currently soliciting exhibition proposals for 2016, 2017, and 2018. The MAGDA Board of Trustees will meet in July to review and select exhibition proposals to present to the membership for possible bookings at the MAGDA conference which will be held in October.

• **All exhibits must be sponsored by an arts organization.** The sponsor organization is responsible for preparing the exhibit for tour, including professional crating, shipping expense and arrangements to first venue, condition report book, labels, interpretive text, press packets, etc. All contracts and communications with MAGDA will be made with the sponsor only.

• **All framed pieces must be framed with plexiglass.**

• **The following must be included in each exhibit proposal:**

1. Processing fee of \$25 per proposal for MAGDA members; \$50 per proposal for non-members;
2. Sponsoring organization's name, address, phone number, email address and name of contact person;
3. A PowerPoint with images of each piece in the exhibit and, if possible, an installation shot. The PowerPoint should be as small as possible, no larger than 45 megabytes, while still being clear. Software is available on the web for compression if needed;
4. A separate disk with good jpg images that are 300 pixels per inch with 1,500 or five inches at the longest. We are trying to

increase our presentation of these exhibits by showing them on the MAGDA website;

5. Name of artist(s);
6. Title of exhibit;
7. Description of exhibit;
8. Number and size of pieces;
9. Space requirements (running wall or square feet);
10. Available dates for touring;
11. Rental fee you desire for each four-week period;
12. Insurance value;
13. Number of crates (within 2), weight of crates (within 50#) and size of crates (within 6"). The sponsoring organization must pay crating charges and shipping to the first venue. Crates must be professionally made, safe for travel and of a reasonable size;
14. Any special restrictions or requirements;
15. Publicity available (catalog, press release, b/w photos, brochure, poster, etc.).

• Proposals missing any of these materials may not be reviewed.

• **Deadline for submitting proposals in June 1, 2015.**

For more information or assistance, contact Executive Director Patty Bergquist, 2112 First Avenue North, Great Falls, MT 59401: 406-761-1797 (phone); 406-761-1797 (fax); or montanaart@bresnan.net